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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 10 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to draw your attention to the latest incident of Palestinian terrorism directed at the citizens of Israel.

This morning, at approximately 8.00 a.m. (local time), a Palestinian terrorist detonated explosive charges strapped to his body near Bar Ilan University, just north of Tel Aviv, killing Saada Aharon, age 71, and wounding 30 others. The terrorist had attempted to board a public bus but slipped and fell to the ground. The bus driver, thinking the terrorist was an injured passenger, came to his aid. Upon discovering the terrorist's explosive belt, passengers fled the area. The terrorist pursued them, and detonated his explosives in a crowd of people on the street.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces have successfully thwarted a number of attempted attacks in recent days. Yesterday, a Palestinian terrorist attempted to infiltrate the community of Morag but was stopped by security forces. Also yesterday, a 100-kilogram bomb, hidden in a hot water boiler, was discovered in Gush Katif. On Sunday, a suicide bomber was intercepted by security forces between Chermesh and Baka el-Sharqiya.

Israel holds the Palestinian Authority responsible for today's attack as well as for ongoing efforts by Palestinian terrorist groups to murder and maim Israeli civilians. More than two years into the Palestinian terrorist campaign, the Palestinian leadership remains steadfast in its refusal to take even the most minimal steps to fulfil its signed commitments and obligations, under international law and in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council, to prevent acts of terror emanating from the territories under its jurisdiction.

Rather than fulfilling its obligation under Security Council resolution 1435 (2002) to arrest terrorists and bring them to justice, Palestinian security forces are instead focusing their efforts on arresting so-called "collaborators", as reflected in recent reports that 18 Palestinians have been detained by Chairman Arafat's forces.

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In describing the arrests, one Palestinian security official was quoted as saying the following: "The Palestinian Authority has declared an all-out and uncompromising war on collaborators in order to purify the Palestinian society from their crimes that are distorting the image of the Palestinian struggle." No similar "uncompromising war" has yet been declared on the terrorists that wilfully target innocent civilians for murder and who continue to obstruct any chance for progress towards a final settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

In the absence of such steps, Israel is compelled to take measures to protect its citizens from the unrelenting threat of Palestinian terrorism. Palestinian terrorists have employed every available means to obscure the distinction between themselves and the civilian populations they target and hide behind. Such flagrant violations are part of a deliberate attempt to maximize the harm inflicted on innocent civilians. The threat to peace and security in the Middle East originates first and foremost from the reckless disregard of Palestinian terrorists for the lives of innocents.

Israel calls on the international community to condemn in the strongest terms suicide bombings and other criminal acts of terrorism, as well as the ongoing support and involvement of the current Palestinian leadership in such acts. Israel also calls upon the Palestinian leadership to fulfil its obligations, to arrest terrorist leaders and bring them to justice, as required by resolution 1435 (2002), and to end incitement in the official media and all financial, logistical and moral support for acts of terrorism, in accordance with its signed commitments and the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 1373 (2001). Only an end to the heinous campaign of Palestinian terrorism, with its terrible cost in Israel and Palestinian lives, can restore hope of achieving a lasting settlement between Israelis and Palestinians.

I submit the present letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 160 and 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative